AVIANUS IN THE MIDDLE AGES: MANUSCRIPTS AND OTHER EVIDENCE OF NACHLEBEN

By

EDITH CARRINGTON JONES

A.B., Washington University, 1916
A.M., Washington University, 1917
B.S. in L.S., University of Illinois, 1927
M.S., University of Illinois, 1933

AN ABSTRACT OF A THESIS

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN CLASSICS
IN THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF THE UNIVERSITY
OF ILLINOIS, 1944

URBANA, ILLINOIS
1944

AVIANUS IN THE MIDDLE AGES: MANUSCRIPTS AND OTHER EVIDENCE OF NACHLEBEN

By

EDITH CARRINGTON JONES

A.B., Washington University, 1916
A.M., Washington University, 1917
B.S. in L.S., University of Illinois, 1927
M.S., University of Illinois, 1933

AN ABSTRACT OF A THESIS

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN CLASSICS
IN THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF THE UNIVERSITY
OF ILLINOIS, 1944

URBANA, ILLINOIS
1944

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Grateful acknowledgments are hereby tendered to Mr. William Abbott Oldfather for suggesting the topic of the present study, allowing free use of material collected over several decades, and for general and constant advice and encouragement; and to Mr. William Robert Jones for expert technical aid with the many problems involved in evaluating the testimony of manuscripts still surviving, as well as for assistance with an intricate and extensive bibliography.

Sincere thanks are due to Mr. Ben Edwin Perry for frequent advice, and especially for freely putting at my disposal his extensive collections of excerpts from the entire field of the ancient and the mediæval Aesopic fable; and to Messrs. Phineas Lawrence Windsor, Carl Milton White, Robert Bingham Downs, and Arnold Herman Trotier, for generous and helpful adjustments of schedule, and for other aid and assistance afforded in a long drawn out program of combined service and study; as well as to Miss Fanny Dunlap for unlimited patience and resourcefulness in helping me to secure by borrowing from other libraries an unusually large number of particularly rare items.

AVIANUS IN THE MIDDLE AGES: MANUSCRIPTS AND OTHER EVIDENCE OF NACHLEBEN

The small collection of *Fables,* put into Latin elegiacs by the otherwise unknown author Avianus, about the year 400 of our era, although one of the minor productions of the Latin genius, has had an interesting history, and has played a not unimportant part in the transmission of a number of the Aesopic fables which it contains. It was no doubt entirely for this reason that Otto Crusius named Avianus, along with Babrius and Phaedrus, as belonging "zu den Grossmächten der Weltlitteratur," despite the mediocrity of his literary talent. Interest attaches to the collection, also, because of its long career as a schoolbook, hundreds of thousands of the best minds of Europe, from the eighth through the sixteenth centuries, having learned Latin as well as versification, together with no small measure of worldly wisdom, from this booklet.

It has been the object of the present study to reconstruct from the still existing manuscripts, and from other mediæval records, the history of the dissemination and influence of this *Liber Auiani,* to follow its fortunes, from the time of its composition downward through the manuscript period, and to make some appraisal of its place in mediæval education and culture, as well as in the history of mediæval fable literature. All these phases of the subject have been subsumed under the technical term nachleben, for which no suitable equivalent exists in the English language, and which has therefore been domesticated by classical scholars, with all the justification of appropriateness and need which attaches to such now completely assimilated words as hinterland and blitzkrieg.

The original intention, which was to carry the investigation down to the time of printing, has of necessity been modified, and the detailed account has stopped with the thirteenth century, although a brief summary of the material which has been collected for the fourteenth and the early fifteenth centuries, is offered at the end. This additional study, it is hoped, will be incorporated in the printed and lengthened version of the present dissertation.

The intrinsic interest of such a detailed study of the mediæval Avianus was suggested by Dr. W. A. Oldfather, and this investigation has been based upon his full records of the manuscripts and other materials for the study of Avianus, and his own discoveries of additional material in the libraries of Europe. Three recent doctoral dissertations, based also upon previous studies and researches of Dr. Oldfather, have contributed much to a more exact and a fuller knowledge of these manuscripts, their con-

tents, and their place in the tradition. These are: A study of the text tradition of Avianus, by Dr. W. R. Jones, and two studies of the mediæval 'adaptations' of Avianus, by Dr. Eileen Ryan, and by Dr. Theodore Bedrick, for the rewritings in verse and in prose, respectively. The present dissertation differs from the other three in being concerned entirely with the external and historical side of the transmission of the *Fables,* rather than with the problems or history of the text proper. The four studies when printed together will, it is hoped, offer some such comprehensive view of the nachleben of Avianus in the manuscript period as the celebrated paleographer, Paul Lehmann, had in mind, when in his survey of the field of mediæval Latin studies, he called attention to the need for up-to-date, inclusive histories of the transmission, interpretation, and influence of the individual Latin authors in the Middle Ages.

The most general outlines of the nachleben of Avianus have been, of course, already admirably sketched in handbooks and editions, *e. g.,* by Martin Schanz in his *Römische Litteraturgeschichte,* by Otto Crusius, in the *RE* article "Avianus," and by Dr. Oldfather in the introduction to the *Ysopet-Avionnet* by Kenneth McKenzie and himself, all these with lists of the more important literature; but no previous attempt has been made to bring all the records together into a single detailed account. The items in the present list and their discussion have been drawn from a variety of sources, the most fundamental, of course, being, for mediæval literature, his great history, and various other compilations, by Max Manitius; for the mediæval catalogs, the standard works by Gustav Becker, Theodor Gottlieb, Léopold Delisle, Paul Lehmann, and others; and for the Avianus manuscripts, the pioneer and monumental work by Léopold Hervieux on the Latin fabulists, his Avianus volume, however, needing to be corrected and supplemented at every turn by fuller and more exact information from Dr. Oldfather's researches on the subject, and from the results of the three monographs mentioned above, as well as by the present study.

Because the number of items in this account is large, it has been found desirable to discuss them individually in separate sections, according to the following plan of arrangement: 1) The extant manuscripts (designated A), including those of the *flores,* commentaries, and adaptations, first by century, and then by the call numbers of the photostats (or, occasionally, photographs) in the Illinois collection; 2) The mediæval catalog records (designated B) arranged by century, and after that by country, following the geographical arrangement of the *Handschriften*

antiker Autoren by Max Manitius; 3) Mentions or uses of Avianus in mediæval literature (designated C), arranged first by century, then roughly by date. In all, the total of approximately 173 items of varying degrees of intricacy, covering the three types of material listed have been investigated and discussed. These separate discussions and descriptions, which have been limited to what have seemed the truly pertinent facts, and the most necessary elucidation, have emphasized chiefly the date and the location to which the reference is to be assigned, and its significance for the history of Avianus in the mediæval schools, or in mediæval literature. At the end of the compilations for each century there has been added a summary, recapitulating briefly the following points: 1) The number of manuscripts, a) extant, and b) recorded in mediæval documents; 2) The list of specific places where manuscripts of the *Fables* of Avianus were certainly to be found; 3) The typical contents of the books, or lists of books, in which Avianus was included, as showing the place of the work in the education or reading of the time; 4) The general history of the *Fables* in the schools; 5) The nature of the uses, quotations, or opinions of the work, found in mediæval writings of the period; and 6) in particular its influence upon or connection with other Aesopic fable literature, and kindred types of composition.

With regard to the points enumerated above, the results of the whole investigation may now be summarized, or at least suggested, thus: 1. A total of sixty-nine extant manuscripts (including *flores Aviani,* commentary manuscripts, manuscripts of *Novi Aviani,* and translations) are known for centuries eight through thirteen. For centuries fourteen and fifteen our list includes in addition over seventy-eight extant manuscripts, or a grand total of one hundred and forty-seven items.

A total of approximately forty-eight mediæval catalogs, down through the thirteenth century, which record one copy, or several copies, of Avianus, have been verified and discussed. Of these practically all are included by Manitius in his *Handschriften antiker Autoren,* but our conclusions as to the century and location of several of the records differ somewhat from his.

2. *Places.* In order to show graphically the places where manuscripts of the *Fables* were known during the centuries of the mediæval period, maps have been constructed for each century covered. The whole list for centuries eight through thirteen includes about eighty places, some of which have been indicated only after considerable deliberation, especially

in the case of the more important early manuscripts, the provenience of which is still in dispute.

3. *Contents.* The contents of all the manuscripts have been recorded and considered, principally for the light they throw upon the place occupied by Avianus in the *Liber Catonianus,* the various stages of which have been so thoroughly studied and recorded by the outstanding authority on the *Distichs of Cato,* Marcus Boas. In general, both in mediæval lists and the extant codices, Avianus is found accompanied by the *grammatica, i. e.,* specifically educational books, both technical grammar and the staples of Latin reading (which include such distinctively 'Liberal Arts' authors as Martianus Capella, Boethius, and the Christian poets, Prosper, Arator, Sedulius, and many other standard authors). At least thirty-five of the extant volumes known to us, and fifteen more recorded in mediæval catalogs are listed by Boas as samples of the Catonian series, at one stage or another of its development, and to these five or more not included in his list can be added. Forty of the extant manuscripts of Avianus appear in Eva Sanford's long list of "Libri Manuales," two of the *flores* manuscripts and another possibly complete text of Avianus having previously escaped our collections. Several of our later manuscripts also are parts of compilations which are mentioned in the article by her upon "Some literary interests of fifteenth century German students." A change in the reading series in the fourteenth century resulted in the gradual dropping out of Avianus from the Catonian book. The "Octo Auctores," of the late fifteenth century contained "Aesopus" but not Avianus. Although no longer inevitably included in the Catonian series, Avianus was still a popular school author, but the set of works by which he was now accompanied is quite different and radically modernized.

4. *Place in mediævial education.* There are many points upon which we have been able to do little more than speculate regarding the history of Avianus in the mediæval schools, and a few details seem impossible to settle dogmatically. That the adoption of the *Fables* into the reading program of the elementary course was sponsored by Alcuin, is a conjecture first made by Dr. Oldfather, and based upon the evidence for a lost commentary upon Avianus by Alcuin. At all events, the *Fables* were listed in the earliest known Carolingian catalogs as one of the *grammatica.* The place which Avianus gained thus early, and held for at least six centuries, in almost all elementary reading programs, is well attested, both by the evidence of the manuscripts, and by definite statements on the part of a succession of mediæval school-masters, beginning with Otloh in the

early eleventh century, and by the frequent citation of Avianus in metrical handbooks and glossaries. It seems probable that most of the mediæval variations upon the text of Avianus were developed in the schools, the spurious epimythia and the *flores* manuscripts almost certainly, and many, if not all, of the *Novi Aviani* in both verse and prose. Of course the *Accessus* manuscripts and the other varieties of commentary, whether accompanying the text, or separate from it, are phenomena of the schools, as are also the allegorizations of the various fables.

The question how long Avianus was retained in the school reading cannot be definitely settled, since the records are incomplete, and uniformity of practice is not to be assumed even when records still survive. But in the thirteenth century the *Fables* of Avianus were, as we have seen, still at the height of their popularity as an indispensable ingredient of the Latin reading in the schools. That many of the codices of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries were intended for school use, we know also from the diffuse commentaries which accompany the text of the *Fables* in them, as well as from other lines of evidence. The 1494 *editio princeps* of Avianus includes this body of commentary intact, and must therefore have been itself intended as a schoolbook. We have at least one definite reference to Avianus as a school author by a fourteenth century schoolman, and another unmistakable reference from the year 1503.

Whole blocks of fables, taken directly or indirectly, from Avianus, if not from the original text of the *Fables,* are found in representative Latin Aesops of the schools during the first centuries of printing, *e. g.,* the collection edited by Dorp and its descendants, among them the Camerarius editions, which Professor T. W. Baldwin has proved to have contained the Aesopic fables in the form known to William Shakespeare in the period of his grammar school education.

5. *Quotations in mediæval literature.* We can hardly claim, upon the basis of the evidence, that Avianus exerted any very profound literary or moral influence of a high type. For one discriminating appreciation of occasional felicities of expression, such as Matthew of Vendôme's commendation of the end of Fable 1, or (in the seventeenth century) Jeremy Taylor's telling quotation from the fable of "The Fir and the Bramble," we have at least a dozen perfunctory quotations or paraphrases of the familiar ending of Fable 5, "semper asellus eris," or of certain of the epimythia. It is more than probable that Vincent of Beauvais, who included several of the epimythia of Avianus in his *Speculum Historiale,* and that Albert of Stade, and a number of others who quoted the

epimythia, in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, were copying them from *florilegia,* rather than from original texts of the *Fables,* as the authoritative researches of B. L. Ullman have made clear. We have in our list of extant manuscripts at least ten which contain only *flores,* and these are of course only a random sampling of those that once existed. A great number of quotations from the morals of Avianus, some of these so changed as to leave no little doubt of the derivation, are to be found in several proverb collections, notably in that printed by Jakob Werner, in 1912, from five manuscripts.

6. *Place in mediæval fable literature.* In the complicated history of mediæval fable transmission the part played by the small collection of Avianus is fairly straightforward. As a work of pretentious literary quality, it kept its identity distinct, was not influenced by, and did not exert much influence upon, the various streams of Latin fable which issued from Phaedrus and other sources. Its period of unrivalled importance, as representative in the schools of Aesopic fable, came in the early centuries, when it was the only Latin fable collection in verse, having, in the words of Robinson Ellis, put Phaedrus "entirely out of the field." Avianus led the way as a model for imitation and reworking, although the most numerous examples of the *Novi Aviani* were produced in later centuries. It seems likely now that the 'imitation' in leonines by a poet of Asti, the earliest and most influential of those who sought to put into 'modern' verse the stories of Avianus, must have been composed as far back as the early eleventh century, at the very latest. The *Metrum Leonis* of Leo of Vercelli, which seems to show traces to the influence of Avianus 5, as told by the Poet of Asti, was written about the year 1000. But the prose stories of the Phaedrus and Romulus branch of the Aesopic tradition bade fair from the first to outrival Avianus in real popularity. How early the fables from the two branches, the Romulean and the Avianian, appeared in collections together, we cannot say, but the supposed incorporation of a fable of Avianus in the embroideries of the Bayeux Tapestry, which Joseph Jacobs considered a sign of the early date at which this custom began, is now known to be a misunderstanding produced by the faulty reproduction of the scene in question, as Mlle. Chefneux has shown. Certainly such a natural thing to do must have been done almost from the beginning, however. At least towards the end of the twelfth century, selected fables from Avianus are to be found in French verse, in imitation of, and in combination with, fables by Marie de France. The Hebrew *Mischle Schualim,* or Fox Book, of Berechyah ha-Nakdan, in the twelfth or

thirteenth century, contains also a combination of fables from Marie de France and from Avianus. After the composition of the Walter of England Aesop, in the late twelfth century, and the beginning of its vogue, we find Avianus often in company with the newer collections, and frequent combinations of selected fables from the two, both in the vernacular and in Latin, *e. g.*, the so-called "Dérivé Complet" collection, the "Ysopet-Avionnet" of Paris and that of Chartres, Hugo of Trimberg's *Renner*, the collection of morals from the two in a Milan manuscript, which P. Rajna calls a "compilacio Aviani alata cum Ysopeto," the combination of epimythia, and commentary upon them, from the two authors in the "Magister Esopus et Avianus" of a Budapest manuscript, and the Magdeburg and the Leipzig Aesops. The Steinhöwel Aesop and that of Dorp, with their selections from Avianus, merely follow the pattern of the mediæval fable-books.

To appraise the influence of Avianus, it is necessary to consider as separate units certain of the fables in his collection. For the most part Avianus is pure Babrius, only five of his fables failing to appear either in Babrius, as we know his collection, or in some related paraphrase. Of the five exceptions, the best known today is that of "The Thirsty Crow," a fable which we find also in Romulus, and among the Pseudo-Dosithean fragments. Another one, Avianus 22, and its great vogue, has been the subject of an interesting article by Bruno Borowski. The other three are not quite such famous stories. Probably few people in the present era have heard at all the tales of "The Boy and the Thief at the Well," or "The Fish and the Lamprey," but, whether or not we know the story of the last fable in this group of five, "The Farmer and Hercules," we have a proverbial saying about 'putting one's shoulder to the wheel', which, in the opinion of M. Ellwood Smith, is an 'unconscious allusion' to that fable.

Since the Greek Aesop was a closed book to western Europe during the Middle Ages, most of the other fables of Avianus, during that period, were uniquely transmitted by that collection. Very few of the forty-two duplicate or resemble any of those in the rival collections, Phaedrus, and Romulus. Among this handful of parallel pieces, the most important are the fable of "The Ant and the Grasshopper," and "The Tortoise and the Eagle," the latter being also in Phaedrus, as that author is now known to us. The pleasing fable of "The Oak and the Reed" is not found in Romulus, until we come to the Steinhöwel edition, in which it has been included from some as yet undetermined source. The fable of "The

Hunter and the Lion" is found, with some differences of detail, in Pseudo-Dositheus and in Romulus. Georg Thiele traces the history of this fable all the way from a scholiast upon Euripides to Chaucer's "peynted leoun." "The Dog and the Lion" of Avianus is practically the same story as "The Dog and the Wolf" by Phaedrus, and Romulus, with the moral: "How sweet is Liberty!" See the recent article by Halvdan Koht upon the liberty poems from the end of the Middle Ages, in which he considers the probable influence of this particular fable upon the conception of that priceless value, and specifically upon a Swedish song of 1440, in praise of liberty.

With these exceptions the fables of Avianus did not correspond to those of Romulus, or to those of the other branches of Aesopic fable, which were known during the Middle Ages. Among the fables preserved in Latin only by Avianus are three or four at least of the best and most popular Aesopic fables of all time. The most conspicuously popular of these is the fable of "The Goose That Laid the Golden Egg," which was taken over from Avianus by Boner, in the fourteenth century, by Steinhöwel and by Brant, in the fifteenth, by Erasmus Alberus, in the sixteenth, by LaFontaine, in the seventeenth, and so on down to the still current later collections. Another well-known story is that of "The Wind and the Sun," which appears nowhere in the other Latin collections until the Renaissance versions from the Greek were made. "The Two Travellers and a Bear," "The Frog Physician," "The Four Bulls and the Lion,"—all these were still well enough known, down to almost the beginning of the twentieth century to be used with effect by Thomas Nast, the political cartoonist, as W. R. Jones has recently pointed out. But a number of the unique Avianian stories, which were exceedingly popular during the Middle Ages, have now lost much of their appeal. We are still acquainted with the story of "The Ass in the Lion's Skin," but as a symbol of an unworthy masquerader it does not come to our minds so readily as does the biblical "Wolf in Sheep's Clothing," although the latter, to be sure, has a distinctly different connotation. The ecclesiastics of the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries, used the fable of "The Ass in the Lion's Skin," especially its ending "semper asellus eris," and its moral, as familiar tags. Many of the fables of Avianus lived principally in their epimythia, this being especially true of Avianus 1, 2, and 8. A good example is Avianus 1, "The Nurse and the Wolf," the rather far-fetched moral of which, "Never trust a woman," was elaborated in many variant forms, which appear both in the manuscripts and in the *florilegia*.

VITA

Edith Carrington Jones, only daughter of the Reverend Joseph Courtney Jones and Edith Catharine (Mitchell) Jones, was born in Baltimore, Maryland, October 29, 1894.

She prepared for college in the High School at Webster Groves, Missouri, took the degree of Bachelor of Arts in Washington University in 1916, and the degree of Master of Arts in the same University in the following year.

After teaching two years in Jackson Academy, St. Louis, she became an assistant in the Library of the Washington University School of Medicine. From 1922 until 1929 she was librarian of the University of Missouri School of Mines and Metallurgy, at Rolla, Missouri. During that time she attended two summer sessions, and one semester at the University of Illinois, receiving the degree of Bachelor of Science in Library Science in 1927.

In 1929 she returned to the University of Illinois as a Cataloger, taking charge also of the Library in the Classical Seminar, a position which she has held ever since.

In 1933 she received the degree of Master of Science in Library Science. At the graduate level she has done work with Ethel Bond, Anne Morris Boyd, Howard Vernon Canter, Willia Kathryn Garver, William Roy Mackenzie, Frank Justus Miller, William Abbott Oldfather, Ben Edwin Perry, Garnett Gladwin Sedgewick, Frances Simpson, George Reeves Throop, and Phineas Lawrence Windsor. She is a member of Phi Beta Kappa and Eta Sigma Phi.